

ALLEGHENY OBSERVATORY.
ALLEGHENY, PENNSYLVANIA.

Nov. 11. 87

Dear Dr Gray.

Thank you for your letter of the 6.th and for the assurance that the meeting of the 18.th will have your presence. Though I could have wished the Committee had chosen a day, less intimately connected with your own Anniversary.

It is possible that I may be in Boston Monday, but lest I do not see you ^{there} I will only say in reference to the thoughts your letter called out, that I have but one thing in my mind about the Smithsonian which seems to rise to the position of a guiding moral principle, and that is, that it is its first duty, as its actual highest privilege, to be independent. Everything is secondary to this; just because this independance enables it to do good in a wider way